

Message Text

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INFO USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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SUBJECT: TAIWANESE IN SOUTH VIETNAM

REF: GENEVA 4358, GENEVA 4314 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: IN EXPLORATORY BACKGROUND CONVERSATIONS WITH AN APPROPRIATE GROC OFFICIAL CONCERNING ETHNIC CHINESE STILL IN VIETNAM WHO WISH TO LEAVE AND RESIDE IN TAIWAN, IT APPEARS THAT THE GROC WILL NOT RPT NOT CHANGE ITS PRESENT POLICY REGARDING REFUGEES. FURTHER, THE PROBLEM OF ETHNIC CHINESE STILL IN VIETNAM IS MUCH MORE COMPLEX THAN THE ICRC'S REQUEST THAT THE GROC ACCEPT "CHINESE OF TAIWAN ORIGIN IN SOUTH VIETNAM" FOR RESETTLEMENT IN TAIWAN. IT IS OUR VIEW THAT THE USG WOULD HAVE LITTLE INFLUENCE OVER THE PRESENT GROC REFUGEE POLICY AND ANY OFFICIAL USG REPRESENTATIONS WOULD PROBABLY BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. END SUMMARY.

1. BEFORE DISCUSSING THE SPECIFIC CONVERSATION OUTLINED IN
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SUMMAR ABOVE, WE WISH TO CLARIFY AND CORRECT SEVERAL

STATEMENTS MADE IN GENEVA 4358. THERE ARE VERY FEW " CHINESE OF TAIWAN ORIGIN" (I.E., PERSONS BORN ON THE ISLAND OF TAIWAN) PRESENTLY IN SOUTH VIETNAM. WE ASSUME THAT WHEN REFTEL MENTIONS 2,000 CHINESE WHO "HAVE DOCUMENTS ATTESTING TO THEIR TAIWAN BIRTH AND NATIONALITY" THEY ARE REFERRING TO ETHNIC CHINESE IN SOUTH VIETNAM WHO ARE THE BEARERS OF REPUBLIC OF CHINA(ROC) PASSPORTS. ALMOST ALL ROC PASSPORT BEARERS IN SOUTH VIETNAM ARE PERSONS WHO WERE BORN IN MAINLAND CHINA (MOSTLY FROM CANTON PROVINCE) AND THE DESCENDANTS OF PERSONS BORN IN CHINA.

2. ROC NATIONALITY LAW OPERATES EXCLUSIVELY ON THE PRINCIPLE OF "JUS SANGUINIS", THE RIGHT OF THE BLOOD. ANY PERSON WHO CAN SHOW THAT HIS FATHER, GRANDFATHER, OR EVEN GREAT-GREAT-GREAT GRANDFATHER WAS CHINESE, IS NORMALLY ENTITLED TO AND WILL BE ISSUED AN ROC PASSPORT REGARDLESS OF ANY OTHER NATIONALITY THE PERSON MAY HOLD. HOWEVER, WHILE MANY ETHNIC CHINESE WHO ARE RESIDENT IN ASIA OUTSIDE TAIWAN HOLD ROC PASSPORTS, THEY CANNOT RPT N OT ENTER TAIWAN UNLESS THEY HAVE RECEIVED AN "ENTRY PQRMIT" PRIOR TO ARRIVAL IN TAIWAN. IN MOST CASES, ROC PASSPORT BEARERS SUBMIT ENTRY PERMIT APPLICATIONS DIRECTLY TO THE OVERSEAS CHINESE COMMISSION IN TAIPEI OR THROUGH ROC CONSULATES. INFORMAL ROC MISSIONS IN COUNTRIES SUCH AS JAPAN, THAILAND, AND THE PHILIPPINES, WHICH NOW HAVE OFFICIAL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF CHINA, ALSO ACCEPT "ENTRY PERMIT" APPLICATIONS. APPLICATIONS FOR ROC ENTRY PERMITS UNDERGO A THOROUGH SECURITY SCREENING AND MUST SHOW THAT THERE IS A "GUARANTOR" IN TAIWAN (USUALLY A CLOSE RELATIVE, FRIEND, OR BUSINESS ASSOCIATE) BEFORE THEY WILL BE APPROVED. ENTRY PERMIT APPLICATIONS FROM PERSONS WHO HAVE RECENTLY LEFT COMMUNIST CONTROLLED COUNTRIES ARE OFTEN DENIED FOR SECURITY REASONS.

3. AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM (GVN) IN 1954, MOST MEMBERS OF THE CHINESE COMMUNITY IN SOUTH VIETNAM BECAME "NATURALIZED"GVN CITIZENSAND GAVE UP THEIR ROC PASSPORTS. FURTHER, THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE UNOFFICIAL DISCRIMINATIO AGAINST "CHINESE" CITIZENS IN SOUTH VIETNAM, PARTICULARLY AGAINST BUSINESSMEN. DESPITE THIS WHOLESALE

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"VIETNAMIZATION" OF THE CHINESE COMMUNITY IN SOUTH VIETNAM, THERE WERE STILL ABOUT 2,000 HOLDERS OF ROC PASSPORTS IN VIETNAM A FEW MONTHS BEFORE THE FALL.

4. DURING AN INFORMAL LUNCHEON MEETING WITH AN OFFICER OF THE OFFICE OF CONSULAR AFFAIRS OF MOFA, AN EMBOFF RAISED THE ISSUE OF ETHNIC CHINESE REMAINING IN SOUTH VIETNAM WHO WISHED TO COME TO TAIWAN. HE WAS TOLD THAT IN THE FEW MONTHS

IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING THE COMMUNIST TAKEOVER, ABOUT 8,000 ROC PASSPORTS WERE ISSUED BY MOFA IN TAIPEI TO ETHNIC CHINESE STILL IN SOUTH VIETNAM UPON APPLICATION BY THEIR FRIENDS AND RELATIVES IN TAIWAN. THE HOPE WAS THAT THESE ROC PASSPORTS COULD BE TRANSMITTED TO THE BEARERS IN SOUTH VIETNAM WHO WOULD THEN MANAGE TO ESCAPE TO TAIWAN OR OTHER THIRD COUNTRIES BEFORE A COMMUNIST TAKEOVER. HE ESTIMATED THAT THERE WOULD BE ABOUT 3,000 HEADS OF FAMILIES WHO CLAIM TO BE CHINESE STILL IN VIETNAM AND THAT THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PERSONS WHO COULD CLAIM CHINESE NATIONALITY WAS PROBABLY ABOUT 50,000 IN ALL.

5. BEGINNING IN APRIL 1975, A SPECIAL REVIEW BOARD WAS SET UP TO ISSUE ENTRY PERMITS TO CHINESE STILL IN SAIGON. EVEN AFTER THE COMMUNIST TAKEOVER, SOME BEARERS OF ROC PASSPORTS DID MANAGE TO LEAVE SOUTH VIETNAM AND COME TO TAIWAN, USUALLY STAYING A FEW DAYS IN BANGKOK TO PICK UP ENTRY VISAS. HOWEVER, BEGINNING IN DECEMBER 1975, ALL APPLICATIONS FOR ROC ENTRY PERMITS WERE DENIED FOR SECURITY REASONS EVEN WHEN THE APPLICANT HAD A CLOSE FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN TAIWAN.

6. FURTHER DISCUSSION REVEALED THAT THE GROC FEELS THAT IT HAS DONE ITS SHARE IN ASSISTING INDOCHINESE REFUGEES IN ACCEPTING ABOUT 4,000 REFUGEES WHO HAVE SETTLED IN TAIWAN. MANY OF THESE REFUGEES REQUIRED ASSISTANCE FROM THE GROC AND HAVE HAD SOME DIFFICULTY IN ADAPTING TO LIFE IN TAIWAN. HOWEVER, THE MAIN REASON THE GROC HAS STOPPED ACCEPTING REFUGEES FROM VIETNAM IS ITS BELIEF THAT SUCH REFUGEES POSE A POTENTIAL SECURITY THREAT TO THE ROC. IDEALLY, WHAT THE GROC WOULD LIKE TO DO IS HAVE THE CHINESE REFUGEES ACCEPTED BY A THIRD COUNTRY WHERE THEY COULD BE INTERVIEWED AND THOROUGHLY SCREENED. AFTER PROCESSING, THEY COULD THEN BE ADMITTED TO THE ROC. WHEN THE OBVIOUS PROBLEM OF WHAT

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HAPPENS TO THOSE REFUGEES WHO ARE DENIED ADMISSION TO TAIWAN WAS RAISED, IT WAS ADMITTED THAT IT WAS UNLIKELY THAT ANY THIRD COUNTRY WOULD ACCEPT THE "CHINESE REFUGEES" KNOWING THAT A GOOD PERCENTAGE MIGHT END UP AS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE THIRD COUNTRY.

7. COMMENT: EMBOFF WHO DISCUSSED REFUGEE PROBLEM WITH MOFA OFFICIAL WAS IMPRESSED BY HIS CANDID DISCUSSION OF THE PROBLEM OF ETHNIC CHINESE WHO WISH TO LEAVE VIETNAM. IT IS OUR VIEW THAT GROC POLICY ON THIS MATTER IS FIRMLY ESTABLISHED AND THAT ANY USG REPRESENTATIONS WOULD BE OF LITTLE VALUE AND MIGHT BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. MOFA REP ALSO MENTIONED THAT AN EXPECTED VISIT BY ICRC REP TO TAIPEI HAD BEEN ABRUPTLY CANCELLED BY ICRC REPRESENTATIVE. MOFA REPRESENTATIVE'S COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED VISIT WAS THAT GROC'S

POSITION HAD BEEN CLEARLY EXPLAINED PREVIOUSLY. HE ADDED,
"WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH THOSE PEOPLE? DON'T THEY BELIEVE
WHAT WE HAVE TOLD THEM?"
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